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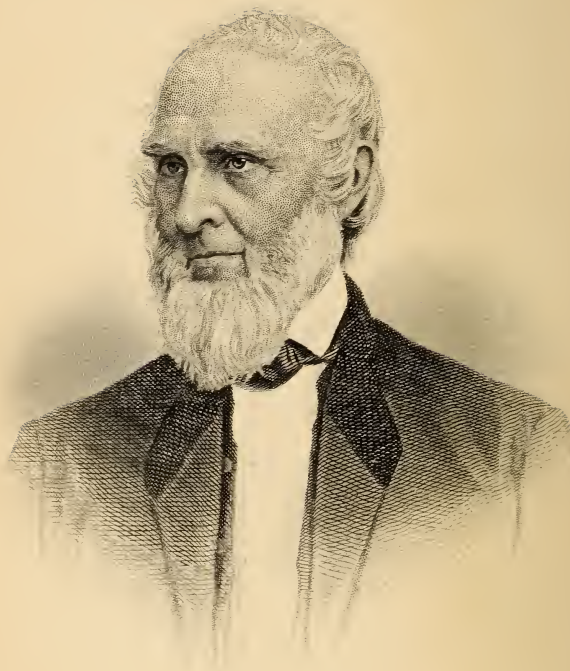


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THE BAY OF SEVEN ISLANDS,
AND OTHER POEMS.





Yours truly
John G. Fletcher



THE

BAY OF SEVEN ISLANDS,

AND OTHER POEMS.

BY

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER.



BOSTON:
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To

EDWIN P. WHIPPLE,

ONE OF THE FIRST TO WELCOME MY EARLIEST VOLUME,

I OFFER THE LATEST,

AS A TOKEN OF FRIENDSHIP NEVER INTERRUPTED,

AND WHICH YEARS HAVE ONLY STRENGTHENED.

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To H. P. S.

FROM the green Amesbury hill which bears
the name

Of that half mythic ancestor of mine
Who trod its slopes two hundred years ago,
Down the long valley of the Merrimac
Midway between me and the river's mouth,
I see thy home, set like an eagle's nest
Among Deer Island's immemorial pines,
Crowning the crag on which the sunset breaks
Its last red arrow. Many a tale and song,
Which thou hast told or sung, I call to mind,
Softening with silvery mist the woods and hills,
The out-thrust headlands and in-reaching bays
Of our northeastern coast-line, trending where
The Gulf, midsummer, feels the chill blockade
Of icebergs stranded at its northern gate.

To thee the echoes of the Island Sound

Answer not vainly, nor in vain the moan
Of the South Breaker prophesying storm.
And thou hast listened, like myself, to men
Sea-periled oft where Anticosti lies
Like a fell spider in its web of fog,
Or where the Grand Bank shallows with the
 wrecks
Of sunken fishers; and to whom strange isles
And frost-rimmed bays and trading stations
 seem
Familiar as Great Neck and Kettle Cove,
Nubble and Boon, the common names of home.

So let me offer thee this lay of mine,
Simple and homely, lacking much thy play
Of color and of fancy. If its theme
And treatment seem to thee befitting youth
Rather than age, let this be my excuse:
It has beguiled some heavy hours and called
Some pleasant memories up; and, better still,
Occasion lent me for a kindly word
To one who is my neighbor and my friend.

THE BAY OF SEVEN ISLANDS.

THE skipper sailed out of the harbor mouth,
Leaving the apple-bloom of the South
For the ice of the Eastern seas,
In his fishing schooner Breeze.

Handsome and brave and young was he,
And the maids of Newbury sighed to see
His lessening white sail fall
Under the sea's blue wall.

Through the Northern Gulf and the misty
screen
Of the isles of Mingan and Madeleine,
St. Paul's and Blanc Sablon,
The little Breeze sailed on,

12 *THE BAY OF SEVEN ISLANDS.*

Backward and forward, along the shore
Of lorn and desolate Labrador,
 And found at last her way
 To the Seven Islands Bay.

The little hamlet, nestling below
Great hills white with lingering snow,
 With its tin-roofed chapel stood
 Half hid in the dwarf spruce wood ;

Green-turfed, flower-sown, the last outpost
Of summer upon the dreary coast,
 With its gardens small and spare,
 Sad in the frosty air.

Hard by where the skipper's schooner lay,
A fisherman's cottage looked away
 Over isle and bay, and behind
 On mountains dim-defined.

And there twin sisters, fair and young,
Laughed with their stranger guest, and sung

In their native tongue the lays
Of the old Provençal days.

Alike were they, save the faint outline
Of a scar on Suzette's forehead fine ;
And both, it so befell,
Loved the heretic stranger well.

Both were pleasant to look upon,
But the heart of the skipper clave to one ;
Though less by his eye than heart
He knew the twain apart.

Despite of alien race and creed,
Well did his wooing of Marguerite speed ;
And the mother's wrath was vain
As the sister's jealous pain.

The shrill-tongued mistress her house forbade,
And solemn warning was sternly said
By the black-robed priest, whose word,
As law the hamlet heard.

But half by voice and half by signs
The skipper said, "A warm sun shines
 On the green-banked Merrimac;
 Wait, watch, till I come back.

"And when you see, from my mast head,
The signal fly of a kerchief red,
 My boat on the shore shall wait;
 Come, when the night is late."

Ah! weighed with childhood's haunts and
 friends,
And all that the home sky overbends,
 Did ever young love fail
 To turn the trembling scale?

Under the night, on the wet sea sands,
Slowly unclasped their plighted hands:
 One to the cottage hearth,
 And one to his sailor's berth.

What was it the parting lovers heard?
Nor leaf, nor ripple, nor wing of bird,

But a listener's stealthy tread
On the rock-moss, crisp and dead.

He weighed his anchor, and fished once more
By the black coast-line of Labrador ;
And by love and the north wind driven,
Sailed back to the Islands Seven.

In the sunset's glow the sisters twain
Saw the Breeze come sailing in again ;
Said Suzette, "Mother dear,
The heretic's sail is here."

"Go, Marguerite, to your room, and hide ;
Your door shall be bolted !" the mother
cried :

While Suzette, ill at ease,
Watched the red sign of the Breeze.

At midnight, down to the waiting skiff
She stole in the shadow of the cliff ;
And out of the Bay's mouth ran
The schooner with maid and man.

And all night long, on a restless bed,
Her prayers to the Virgin Marguerite said;
 And thought of her lover's pain
 Waiting for her in vain.

Did he pace the sands? Did he pause to hear
The sound of her light step drawing near?
 And, as the slow hours passed,
 Would he doubt her faith at last?

But when she saw through the misty pane,
The morning break on a sea of rain,
 Could even her love avail
 To follow his vanished sail?

Meantime the Breeze, with favoring wind,
Left the rugged Moisie hills behind,
 And heard from an unseen shore
 The falls of Manitou roar.

On the morrow's morn, in the thick, gray
 weather
They sat on the reeling deck together,

Lover and counterfeit,
Of hapless Marguerite.

With a lover's hand, from her forehead fair
He smoothed away her jet-black hair.

What was it his fond eyes met?
The scar of the false Suzette!

Fiercely he shouted: "Bear away
East by north for Seven Isles Bay!"

The maiden wept and prayed,
But the ship her helm obeyed.

Once more the Bay of the Isles they found:
They heard the bell of the chapel sound,
And the chant of the dying sung
In the harsh, wild Indian tongue.

A feeling of mystery, change, and awe
Was in all they heard and all they saw:
Spell-bound the hamlet lay
In the hush of its lonely bay.

And when they came to the cottage door,
The mother rose up from her weeping sore,
And with angry gestures met
The scared look of Suzette.

“Here is your daughter,” the skipper said;
“Give me the one I love instead.”
But the woman sternly spake;
“Go, see if the dead will wake!”

He looked. Her sweet face still and white
And strange in the noonday taper light,
She lay on her little bed,
With the cross at her feet and head.

In a passion of grief the strong man bent
Down to her face, and, kissing it, went
Back to the waiting Breeze,
Back to the mournful seas.

Never again to the Merrimac
And Newbury's homes that bark came back.

Whether her fate she met
On the shores of Carraquette,

Miscou, or Tracadie, who can say?
But even yet at Seven Isles Bay
Is told the ghostly tale
Of a weird, unspoken sail,

In the pale, sad light of the Northern day
Seen by the blanketed Montagnais,
Or squaw, in her small kyack,
Crossing the spectre's track.

On the deck a maiden wrings her hands;
Her likeness kneels on the gray coast sands;
One in her wild despair,
And one in the trance of prayer.

She flits before no earthly blast,
The red sign fluttering from her mast,
Over the solemn seas,
The ghost of the schooner Breeze!

HOW THE WOMEN WENT FROM DOVER.

1662.

THE tossing spray of Coheco's fall
Hardened to ice on its rocky wall,
As through Dover town, in the chill, gray
dawn,
Three women passed, at the cart-tail drawn!¹

¹ The following is a copy of the warrant issued by Major Waldron, of Dover, in 1662. The Quakers, as was their wont, prophesied against him, and saw, as they supposed, the fulfillment of their prophecy when, many years after, he was killed by the Indians.

To the constables of Dover, Hampton, Salisbury, Newbury, Rowley, Ipswich, Wenham, Lynn, Boston, Roxbury, Dedham, and until these vagabond Quakers are carried out of this jurisdiction.

You, and every one of you, are required, in the King's Majesty's name, to take these vagabond Quakers, Anne Colman, Mary Tomkins, and Alice Ambrose, and make them fast to the cart's tail, and driving the cart through

Bared to the waist for the north wind's grip
And keener sting of the constable's whip,
The blood that followed each hissing blow
Froze as it sprinkled the winter snow.

Priest and ruler, boy and maid
Followed the dismal cavalcade ;
And from door and window, open thrown,
Looked and wondered gaffer and crone.

your several towns, to whip them upon their naked backs not exceeding ten stripes apiece on each of them in each town ; and so to convey them from constable to constable till they are out of this jurisdiction, as you will answer it at your peril ; and this shall be your warrant.

RICHARD WALDRON.

Dated at Dover, December 22, 1662.

This warrant was executed only in Dover and Hampton. At Salisbury the constable refused to obey it. He was sustained by the town's people, who were under the influence of Major Robert Pike, the leading man in the lower valley of the Merrimac, who stood far in advance of his time, as an advocate of religious freedom, and an opponent of ecclesiastical authority. He had the moral courage to address an able and manly letter to the court at Salem, remonstrating against the witchcraft trials.

22 *HOW THE WOMEN WENT FROM DOVER.*

“God is our witness,” the victims cried,
“We suffer for Him who for all men died ;
The wrong ye do has been done before,
We bear the stripes that the Master bore

“And thou, O Richard Waldron, for whom
We hear the feet of a coming doom,
On thy cruel heart and thy hand of wrong
Vengeance is sure, though it tarry long.

“In the light of the Lord, a flame we see
Climb and kindle a proud roof-tree ;
And beneath it an old man lying dead,
With stains of blood on his hoary head.”

“Smite, Goodman Hate-Evil ! — harder still !”
The magistrate cried, “lay on with a will !
Drive out of their bodies the Father of Lies,
Who through them preaches and prophecies !”

So into the forest they held their way,
By winding river and frost-rimmed bay,

Over wind-swept hills that felt the beat
Of the winter sea at their icy feet.

The Indian hunter, searching his traps,
Peered stealthily through the forest gaps;
And the outlying settler shook his head, —
“They’re witches going to jail,” he said.

At last a meeting-house came in view;
A blast on his horn the constable blew;
And the boys of Hampton cried up and down,
“The Quakers have come!” to the wondering
town.

From barn and woodpile the goodman came;
The goodwife quitted her quilting frame,
With her child at her breast; and, hobbling
slow,

The grandam followed to see the show.

Once more the torturing whip was swung,
Once more keen lashes the bare flesh stung.

“ Oh, spare ! they are bleeding ! ” a little maid
cried,
And covered her face the sight to hide.

A murmur ran round the crowd : “ Good folks,”
Quoth the constable, busy counting the strokes,
“ No pity to wretches like these is due,
They have beaten the gospel black and blue ! ”

Then a pallid woman, in wild-eyed fear,
With her wooden noggin of milk drew near.
“ Drink, poor hearts ! ” A rude hand smote
Her draught away from a parching throat.

“ Take heed,” one whispered, “ they ’ll take
your cow
For fines, as they took your horse and plow,
And the bed from under you.” “ Even so,”
She said. “ They are cruel as death I know.”

Then on they passed, in the waning day,
Through Seabrook woods, a weariful way ;

By great salt meadows and sand-hills bare,
And glimpses of blue sea here and there.

By the meeting-house in Salisbury town,
The sufferers stood, in the red sundown,
Bare for the lash! O pitying Night,
Drop swift thy curtain and hide the sight!

With shame in his eye and wrath on his lip
The Salisbury constable dropped his whip.
"This warrant means murder foul and red;
Cursed is he who serves it," he said.

"Show me the order, and meanwhile strike
A blow at your peril!" said Justice Pike.
Of all the rulers the land possessed,
Wiseest and boldest was he, and best.

He scoffed at witchcraft; the priest he met
As man meets man; his feet he set
Beyond his dark age, standing upright,
Soul-free, with his face to the morning light.

He read the warrant: "*These convey
From our precincts; at every town on the
way
Give each ten lashes.*" "God judge the brute!
I tread his order under my foot!

"Cut loose these poor ones and let them
go;
Come what will of it, all men shall know
No warrant is good, though backed by the
Crown,
For whipping women in Salisbury town!"

The hearts of the villagers, half released
From creed of terror and rule of priest,
By a primal instinct owned the right
Of human pity in law's despite.

For ruth and chivalry only slept,
His Saxon manhood the yeoman kept;
Quicker or slower, the same blood ran
In the Cavalier and the Puritan.

The Quakers sank on their knees in praise
And thanks. A last, low sunset blaze
Flashed out from under a cloud, and shed
A golden glory on each bowed head.

The tale is one of an evil time,
When souls were fettered and thought was
 crime,
And heresy's whisper above its breath
Meant shameful scourging and bonds and
 death!

What marvel that, hunted and sorely tried,
Even woman rebuked and prophesied,
And soft words rarely answered back
The grim persuasion of whip and rack!

If her cry from the whipping-post and
 jail
Pierced sharp as the Kenite's driven nail,
O woman, at ease in these happier days,
Forbear to judge of thy sister's ways!

How much thy beautiful life may owe
To her faith and courage thou canst not
 know,
Nor how from the paths of thy calm retreat
She smoothed the thorns with her bleeding
 feet.

A SUMMER PILGRIMAGE.

To kneel before some saintly shrine,
To breathe the health of airs divine,
Or bathe where sacred rivers flow,
The cowed and turbaned pilgrims go.
I too, a palmer, take, as they,
With staff and scallop-shell my way,
To feel, from burdening cares and ills,
The strong uplifting of the hills.

The years are many since, at first,
For dreamed-of wonders all athirst,
I saw on Winnepesaukee fall
The shadow of the mountain wall.
Ah! where are they who sailed with me
The beautiful island-studded sea?
And am I he whose keen surprise
Flashed out from such unclouded eyes?

Still, when the sun of summer burns,
My longing for the hills returns ;
And northward, leaving at my back
The warm vale of the Merrimac,
I go to meet the winds of morn,
Blown down the hill-gaps, mountain-born,
Breathe scent of pines, and satisfy
The hunger of a lowland eye.

Again I see the day decline
Along the ridged horizon line ;
Touching the hill-tops, as a nun
Her beaded rosary, sinks the sun.
One lake lies golden, which shall soon
Be silver in the rising moon ;
And one the crimson of the skies
And mountain purple multiplies.

With the untroubled quiet blends
The distance-softened voice of friends ;
The girl's light laugh no discord brings
To the low song the pine-tree sings ;

And, not unwelcome, comes the hail
Of boyhood from his nearing sail.
The human presence breaks no spell,
And sunset still is miracle!

Calm as the hour, methinks I feel
A sense of worship o'er me steal;
Not that of satyr-charming Pan,
No cult of Nature shaming man,
Not Beauty's self, but that which lives
And shines through all the veils it weaves,—
Soul of the mountain, lake, and wood,
Their witness to the Eternal Good!

And if, by fond illusion, here
The earth to heaven seems drawing near,
And yon outlying range invites
To other and serener heights,
Scarce hid behind its topmost swell,
The shining Mounts Delectable!
A dream may hint of truth no less
Than the sharp light of wakefulness.

As through her veil of incense smoke
Of old the spell-rapt priestess spoke,
More than her heathen oracle,
May not this trance of sunset tell
That Nature's forms of loveliness
Their heavenly archetypes confess,
Fashioned like Israel's ark alone
From patterns in the Mount made known?

A holier beauty overbroods
These fair and faint similitudes;
Yet not unblest is he who sees
Shadows of God's realities,
And knows beyond this masquerade
Of shape and color, light and shade,
And dawn and set, and wax and wane,
Eternal verities remain.

O gems of sapphire, granite set!
O hills that charmed horizons fret!
I know how fair your morns can break,
In rosy light on isle and lake;

How over wooded slopes can run
The noonday play of cloud and sun,
And evening droop her oriflamme
Of gold and red in still Asquam.

The summer moons may round again,
And careless feet these hills profane ;
These sunsets waste on vacant eyes
The lavish splendor of the skies ;
Fashion and folly, misplaced here,
Sigh for their natural atmosphere,
And traveled pride the outlook scorn
Of lesser heights than Matterhorn :

But let me dream that hill and sky
Of unseen beauty prophesy ;
And in these tinted lakes behold
The trailing of the raiment fold
Of that which, still eluding gaze,
Allures to upward-tending ways,
Whose footprints make, wherever found,
Our common earth a holy ground.

THE ROCK-TOMB OF BRADORE.

A DREAR and desolate shore!
Where no tree unfolds its leaves,
And never the spring wind weaves
Green grass for the hunter's tread;
A land forsaken and dead,
Where the ghostly icebergs go
And come with the ebb and flow
Of the waters of Bradore!

A wanderer, from a land
By summer breezes fanned,
Looked round him, awed, subdued,
By the dreadful solitude,
Hearing alone the cry
Of sea-birds clanging by,
The crash and grind of the floe,

Wail of wind and wash of tide.
“O wretched land!” he cried,
“Land of all lands the worst,
God forsaken and curst!
Thy gates of rock should show
The words the Tusean seer
Read in the Realm of Woe:
Hope entereth not here!”

Lo! at his feet there stood
A block of smooth larch wood,
Waif of some wandering wave,
Beside a rock-closed cave
By Nature fashioned for a grave,
Safe from the ravening bear
And fierce fowl of the air,
Wherein to rest was laid
A twenty summers’ maid,
Whose blood had equal share
Of the lands of vine and snow,
Half French, half Eskimo.
In letters uneffaced,
Upon the block were traced

The grief and hope of man,
And thus the legend ran :

“We loved her !

Words cannot tell how well !

We loved her !

God loved her !

And called her home to peace and rest.

We love her !”

The stranger paused and read.
“O winter land !” he said,
“Thy right to be I own ;
God leaves thee not alone.
And if thy fierce winds blow
Over drear wastes of rock and snow,
And at thy iron gates
The ghostly iceberg waits,
Thy homes and hearts are dear.
Thy sorrow o’er thy sacred dust
Is sanctified by hope and trust ;
God’s love and man’s are here.

And love where'er it goes
Makes its own atmosphere;
Its flowers of Paradise
Take root in the eternal ice,
And bloom through Polar snows!"

STORM ON LAKE ASQUAM.

A CLOUD, like that the old-time Hebrew saw
On Carmel prophesying rain, began
To lift itself o'er wooded Cardigan,
Growing and blackening. Suddenly, a flaw

Of chill wind menaced ; then a strong blast beat
Down the long valley's murmuring pines, and
woke

The noon-dream of the sleeping lake, and broke
Its smooth steel mirror at the mountains' feet.

Thunderous and vast, a fire-veined darkness
swept

Over the rough pine-bearded Asquam range ;
A wraith of tempest, wonderful and strange,
From peak to peak the cloudy giant stepped.

One moment, as if challenging the storm,
Chocorua's tall, defiant sentinel
Looked from his watch-tower ; then the
shadow fell,
And the wild rain-drift blotted out his form.

And over all the still unhidden sun,
Weaving its light through slant-blown veils
of rain,
Smiled on the trouble, as hope smiles on pain ;
And, when the tumult and the strife were done,

With one foot on the lake and one on land,
Framing within his crescent's tinted streak
A far-off picture of the Melvin peak,
Spent broken clouds the rainbow's angel
spanned.

THE WISHING BRIDGE.

AMONG the legends sung or said
Along our rocky shore,
The Wishing Bridge of Marblehead
May well be sung once more.

An hundred years ago (so ran
The old-time story) all
Good wishes said above its span
Would, soon or late, befall.

If pure and earnest, never failed
The prayers of man or maid
For him who on the deep sea sailed,
For her at home who stayed.

Once thither came two girls from school,
And wished in childish glee :
And one would be a queen and rule,
And one the world would see.

Time passed ; with change of hopes and fears,
And in the self-same place,
Two women, gray with middle years,
Stood, wondering, face to face.

With wakened memories, as they met,
They queried what had been :
“A poor man’s wife am I, and yet,”
Said one, “I am a queen.

“My realm a little homestead is,
Where, lacking crown and throne,
I rule by loving services
And patient toil alone.”

The other said : “The great world lies
Beyond me as it laid ;

O'er love's and duty's boundaries
My feet have never strayed.

"I see but common sights of home,
Its common sounds I hear,
My widowed mother's sick-bed room
Sufficeth for my sphere.

"I read to her some pleasant page
Of travel far and wide,
And in a dreamy pilgrimage
We wander side by side.

"And when, at last, she falls asleep,
My book becomes to me
A magic glass: my watch I keep,
But all the world I see.

"A farm-wife queen your place you fill,
While fancy's privilege
Is mine to walk the earth at will,
Thanks to the Wishing Bridge."

“Nay, leave the legend for the truth,”

The other cried, “and say

God gives the wishes of our youth

But in His own best way!”

THE MYSTIC'S CHRISTMAS.

“ALL hail!” the bells of Christmas rang,
“All hail!” the monks at Christmas sang,
The merry monks who kept with cheer
The gladdest day of all their year.

But still apart, unmoved thereat,
A pious elder brother sat
Silent, in his accustomed place,
With God's sweet peace upon his face.

“Why sitt'st thou thus?” his brethren cried.
“It is the blessed Christmas-tide;
The Christmas lights are all aglow,
The sacred lilies bud and blow.

“Above our heads the joy-bells ring,
Without the happy children sing,

And all God's creatures hail the morn
On which the holy Christ was born!

“Rejoice with us; no more rebuke
Our gladness with thy quiet look.”
The gray monk answered: “Keep, I pray,
Even as ye list, the Lord's birthday.

“Let heathen Yule fires flicker red
Where thronged refectory feasts are spread;
With mystery-play and masque and mime
And wait-songs speed the holy time!

“The blindest faith may haply save;
The Lord accepts the things we have;
And reverence, howsoe'er it strays,
May find at last the shining ways.

“They needs must grope who cannot see,
The blade before the ear must be;
As ye are feeling I have felt,
And where ye dwell I too have dwelt.

“But now, beyond the things of sense,
Beyond occasions and events,
I know, through God's exceeding grace,
Release from form and time and place.

“I listen, from no mortal tongue,
To hear the song the angels sung;
And wait within myself to know
The Christmas lilies bud and blow.

“The outward symbols disappear
From him whose inward sight is clear;
And small must be the choice of days
To him who fills them all with praise!

“Keep while you need it, brothers mine,
With honest zeal your Christmas sign,
But judge not him who every morn
Feels in his heart the Lord Christ born!”

.

WHAT THE TRAVELER SAID AT SUNSET.

THE shadows grow and deepen round me,
I feel the dew-fall in the air;
The muezzin of the darkening thicket
I hear the night-thrush call to prayer.

The evening wind is sad with farewells,
And loving hands unclasp from mine;
Alone I go to meet the darkness
Across an awful boundary-line.

As from the lighted hearths behind me
I pass with slow, reluctant feet,
What waits me in the land of strangeness?
What face shall smile, what voice shall greet?

What space shall awe, what brightness blind
me?
What thunder-roll of music stun?

What vast processions sweep before me
Of shapes unknown beneath the sun?

I shrink from unaccustomed glory,
I dread the myriad-voicéd strain;
Give me the unforgotten faces,
And let my lost ones speak again.

He will not chide my mortal yearning
Who is our Brother and our Friend;
In whose full life, divine and human,
The heavenly and the earthly blend.

Mine be the joy of soul-communion,
The sense of spiritual strength renewed,
The reverence for the pure and holy,
The dear delight of doing good.

No fitting ear is mine to listen
An endless anthem's rise and fall;
No curious eye is mine to measure
The pearl gate and the jasper wall.

For love must needs be more than knowledge:

What matter if I never know

Why Aldebaran's star is ruddy

Or warmer Sirius white as snow!

Forgive my human words, O Father!

I go Thy larger truth to prove;

Thy mercy shall transcend my longing:

I seek but love, and Thou art Love!

I go to find my lost and mourned for

Safe in Thy sheltering goodness still,

And all that hope and faith foreshadow

Made perfect in Thy holy will!

A GREETING.

HARRIET BEECHER STOWE'S SEVENTIETH ANNIVERSARY, 1882.

THRICE welcome from the Land of Flowers
And golden-fruited orange bowers
To this sweet, green-turfed June of ours!
To her who, in our evil time,
Dragged into light the nation's crime
With strength beyond the strength of men,
And, mightier than their swords, her pen!
To her who world-wide entrance gave
To the log-cabin of the slave;
Made all his wrongs and sorrows known,
And all earth's languages his own,—
North, South, and East and West, made all
The common air electrical,
Until the o'ercharged bolts of heaven
Blazed down, and every chain was riven!

Welcome from each and all to her
Whose Wooing of the Minister
Revealed the warm heart of the man
Beneath the creed-bound Puritan,
And taught the kinship of the love
Of man below and God above;
To her whose vigorous pencil-strokes
Sketched into life her Oldtown Folks, —
Whose fireside stories, grave or gay,
In quaint Sam Lawson's vagrant way,
With old New England's flavor rife,
Waifs from her rude idyllie life,
Are racy as the legends old
By Chaucer or Boccaccio told;
To her who keeps, through change of place
And time, her native strength and grace,
Alike where warm Sorrento smiles,
Or where, by birchen-shaded isles,
Whose summer winds have shivered o'er
The icy drift of Labrador,
She lifts to light the priceless Pearl
Of Harpswell's angel-beckoned girl!

To her at threescore years and ten
Be tributes of the tongue and pen;
Be honor, praise, and heart-thanks given,
The loves of earth, the hopes of heaven!

Ah, dearer than the praise that stirs
The air to-day, our love is hers!
She needs no guaranty of fame
Whose own is linked with Freedom's name.
Long ages after ours shall keep
Her memory living while we sleep;
The waves that wash our gray coast lines,
The winds that rock the Southern pines,
Shall sing of her; the unending years
Shall tell her tale in unborn ears.
And when, with sins and follies past,
Are numbered color-hate and caste,
White, black, and red shall own as one
The noblest work by woman done.

WILSON.¹

THE lowliest born of all the land,
He wrung from Fate's reluctant hand
The gifts which happier boyhood claims;
And, tasting on a thankless soil
The bitter bread of unpaid toil,
He fed his soul with noble aims.

And Nature, kindly provident,
To him the future's promise lent;
The powers that shape man's destinies,
Patience and faith and toil, he knew;
The close horizon round him grew,
Broad with great possibilities.

¹ Read at the Massachusetts Club on the seventieth anniversary of the birthday of Vice-President Wilson.

By the low hearth-fire's fitful blaze
He read of old heroic days,
 The sage's thought, the patriot's speech ;
Unhelped, alone, himself he taught,
His school the craft at which he wrought,
 His lore the book within his reach.

He felt his country's need ; he knew
The work her children had to do ;
 And when, at last, he heard the call
In her behalf to serve and dare,
Beside his senatorial chair
 He stood the unquestioned peer of all.

Beyond the accident of birth
He proved his simple manhood's worth ;
 Ancestral pride and classic grace
Confessed the large-brained artisan,
So clear of sight, so wise in plan
 And counsel, equal to his place.

With glance intuitive he saw
Through all disguise of form and law,

And read men like an open book;
Fearless and firm, he never quailed
Nor turned aside for threats, nor failed
To do the thing he undertook.

How wise, how brave, he was, how well
He bore himself, let history tell
While waves our flag o'er land and sea,
No black thread in its warp or weft;
He found dissevered States, he left
A grateful Nation, strong and free!

IN MEMORY.

J. T. F.

As a guest who may not stay
Long and sad farewells to say
Glides with smiling face away,

Of the sweetness and the zest
Of thy happy life possessed
Thou hast left us at thy best.

Warm of heart and clear of brain,
Of thy sun-bright spirit's wane
Thou hast spared us all the pain.

Now that thou hast gone away,
What is left of one to say
Who was open as the day?

What is there to gloss or shun?
Save with kindly voices none
Speak thy name beneath the sun.

Safe thou art on every side,
Friendship nothing finds to hide,
Love's demand is satisfied.

Over manly strength and worth,
At thy desk of toil, or hearth,
Played the lambent light of mirth, —

Mirth that lit, but never burned ;
All thy blame to pity turned ;
Hatred thou hadst never learned.

Every harsh and vexing thing
At thy home-fire lost its sting ;
Where thou wast was always spring.

And thy perfect trust in good,
Faith in man and womanhood,
Chance and change and time withstood.

Small respect for cant and whine,
Bigot's zeal and hate malign,
Had that sunny soul of thine.

But to thee was duty's claim
Sacred, and thy lips became
Reverent with one holy Name.

Therefore, on thy unknown way,
Go in God's peace! We who stay
But a little while delay.

Keep for us, O friend, where'er
Thou art waiting, all that here
Made thy earthly presence dear;

Something of thy pleasant past
On a ground of wonder cast,
In the stiller waters glassed!

Keep the human heart of thee;
Let the mortal only be
Clothed in immortality.

And when fall our feet as fell
Thine upon the asphodel,
Let thy old smile greet us well ;

Proving in a world of bliss
What we fondly dream in this, —
Love is one with holiness !

THE POET AND THE CHILDREN.

H. W. L.

WITH a glory of winter sunshine
Over his locks of gray,
In the old historic mansion
He sat on his last birthday;

With his books and his pleasant pictures,
And his household and his kin,
While a sound as of myriads singing
From far and near stole in.

It came from his own fair city,
From the prairie's boundless plain,
From the Golden Gate of sunset,
And the cedarn woods of Maine.

And his heart grew warm within him,
And his moistening eyes grew dim,
For he knew that his country's children
Were singing the songs of him :

The lays of his life's glad morning,
The psalms of his evening time,
Whose echoes shall float forever
On the winds of every clime.

All their beautiful consolations,
Sent forth like birds of cheer,
Came flocking back to his windows,
And sang in the Poet's ear.

Grateful, but solemn and tender,
The music rose and fell
With a joy akin to sadness
And a greeting like farewell.

With a sense of awe he listened
To the voices sweet and young ;

The last of earth and the first of heaven
Seemed in the songs they sung.

And waiting a little longer
For the wonderful change to come,
He heard the Summoning Angel,
Who calls God's children home!

And to him in a holier welcome
Was the mystical meaning given
Of the words of the blessed Master:
"Of such is the kingdom of heaven!"

RABBI ISHMAEL.

THE Rabbi Ishmael, with the woe and sin
Of the world heavy upon him, entering in
The Holy of Holies, saw an awful Face
With terrible splendor filling all the place.
“O Ishmael Ben Elisha!” said a voice,
“What seekest thou? What blessing is thy
choice?”

And, knowing that he stood before the Lord,
Within the shadow of the cherubim,
Wide-winged between the blinding light and
him,

He bowed himself, and uttered not a word,
But in the silence of his soul was prayer:
“O thou Eternal! I am one of all,
And nothing ask that others may not share.
Thou art almighty; we are weak and small,
And yet thy children: let thy mercy spare!”

Trembling, he raised his eyes, and in the place
Of the insufferable glory, lo! a face
Of more than mortal tenderness, that bent
Graciously down in token of assent,
And, smiling, vanished! With strange joy
 elate,
The wondering Rabbi sought the temple's
 gate.

Radiant as Moses from the Mount, he stood
And cried aloud unto the multitude:
"O Israel, hear! The Lord our God is good!
Mine eyes have seen his glory and his grace;
Beyond his judgments shall his love endure;
The mercy of the All Merciful is sure!"

VALUATION.

THE old Squire said, as he stood by his gate,
And his neighbor, the Deacon, went by,
“In spite of my bank stock and real estate,
You are better off, Deacon, than I.

“We’re both growing old, and the end’s drawing near,
You have less of this world to resign,
But in Heaven’s appraisal your assets, I fear,
Will reckon up greater than mine.

“They say I am rich, but I’m feeling so poor,
I wish I could swap with you even:
The pounds I have lived for and laid up in store
For the shillings and pence you have given.”

“ Well, Squire,” said the Deacon, with shrewd
common sense,

While his eye had a twinkle of fun,

“ Let your pounds take the way of my shillings
and pence,

And the thing can be easily done ! ”

WINTER ROSES.¹

MY garden roses long ago

Have perished from the leaf-strewn walks ;
Their pale, fair sisters smile no more
Upon the sweet-brier stalks.

Gone with the flower-time of my life,

Spring's violets, summer's blooming pride,
And Nature's winter and my own
Stand, flowerless, side by side.

So might I yesterday have sung ;

To-day, in bleak December's noon,
Come sweetest fragrance, shapes, and hues,
. The rosy wealth of June !

Bless the young hands that culled the gift,

And bless the hearts that prompted it ;

¹ In reply to a flower gift from Mrs. Putnam's school
at Jamaica Plain.

If undeserved it comes, at least
It seems not all unfit.

Of old my Quaker ancestors
Had gifts of forty stripes save one;
To-day as many roses crown
The gray head of their son.

And with them, to my fancy's eye,
The fresh-faced givers smiling come,
And nine and thirty happy girls
Make glad a lonely room.

They bring the atmosphere of youth;
The light and warmth of long ago
Are in my heart, and on my cheek
The airs of morning blow.

O buds of girlhood, yet unblown,
And fairer than the gift ye chose,
For you may years like leaves unfold
The heart of Sharon's rose!

HYMN.

(FOR THE AMERICAN HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY.)

1882.

O PAINTER of the fruits and flowers,
We own Thy wise design,
Whereby these human hands of ours
May share the work of Thine!

Apart from Thee we plant in vain
The root and sow the seed;
Thy early and Thy later rain,
Thy sun and dew we need.

Our toil is sweet with thankfulness,
Our burden is our boon;
The curse of Earth's gray morning is
The blessing of its noon.

Why search the wide world everywhere
For Eden's unknown ground? —
That garden of the primal pair
May nevermore be found.

But, blest by Thee, our patient toil
May right the ancient wrong,
And give to every clime and soil
The beauty lost so long.

Our homestead flowers and fruited trees
May Eden's orchard shame;
We taste the tempting sweets of these
Like Eve, without her blame.

And, North and South and East and West
The pride of every zone,
The fairest, rarest and the best
May all be made our own.

Its earliest shrines the young world sought
In hill-groves and in bowers,

The fittest offerings thither brought
Were Thy own fruits and flowers.

And still with reverent hands we cull
Thy gifts each year renewed ;
The good is always beautiful,
The beautiful is good.

GODSPEED.

OUTBOUND, your bark awaits you. Were I
one

Whose prayer availeth much, my wish should
be

Your favoring trade-wind and consenting sea.
By sail or steed was never love outrun,

And, here or there, love follows her in whom
All graces and sweet charities unite,

The old Greek beauty set in holier light;
And her for whom New England's byways
bloom,

Who walks among us welcome as the Spring,
Calling up blossoms where her light feet
stray.

God keep you both, make beautiful your
way,

Comfort, console, and bless; and safely bring,
Ere yet I make upon a vaster sea
The unreturning voyage, my friends to me.

AT LAST.

WHEN on my day of life the night is falling,
And, in the winds from unsunned spaces
blown,

I hear far voices out of darkness calling
My feet to paths unknown,

Thou who hast made my home of life so
pleasant,

Leave not its tenant when its walls decay;
O Love Divine, O Helper ever present,
Be Thou my strength and stay!

Be near me when all else is from me drifting:
Earth, sky, home's pictures, days of shade
and shine,

And kindly faces to my own uplifting
The love which answers mine.

I have but Thee, my Father! let Thy spirit
Be with me then to comfort and uphold;
No gate of pearl, no branch of palm I merit,
Nor street of shining gold.

Suffice it if—my good and ill unreckoned,
And both forgiven through thy abounding
grace —
I find myself by hands familiar beckoned
Unto my fitting place.

Some humble door among Thy many mansions,
Some sheltering shade where sin and striving
cease,
And flows forever through heaven's green ex-
pansions
The river of Thy peace.

There, from the music round about me stealing,
I fain would learn the new and holy song,
And find at last, beneath Thy trees of healing,
The life for which I long.

OUR COUNTRY.

READ AT WOODSTOCK, CONN., JULY 4, 1883.

WE give thy natal day to hope,
O Country of our love and prayer!
Thy way is down no fatal slope,
But up to freer sun and air.

Tried as by furnace-fires, and yet
By God's grace only stronger made,
In future task before thee set
Thou shalt not lack the old-time aid.

The fathers sleep, but men remain
As wise, as true, and brave as they;
Why count the loss and not the gain?—
The best is that we have to-day.

Whate'er of folly, shame, or crime,
Within thy mighty bounds transpires,
With speed defying space and time
Comes to us on the accusing wires ;

While of thy wealth of noble deeds,
Thy homes of peace, thy votes unsold,
The love that pleads for human needs,
The wrong redressed, but half is told !

We read each felon's chronicle,
His acts, his words, his gallows-mood ;
We know the single sinner well
And not the nine and ninety good.

Yet if, on daily scandals fed,
We seem at times to doubt thy worth,
We know thee still, when all is said,
The best and dearest spot on earth.

From the warm Mexic Gulf, or where
Belted with flowers Los Angeles

Basks in the semi-tropic air,
To where Katahdin's cedar trees

Are dwarfed and bent by Northern winds,
Thy plenty's horn is yearly filled;
Alone, the rounding century finds
Thy liberal soil by free hands tilled.

A refuge for the wronged and poor,
Thy generous heart has borne the blame
That, with them, through thy open door,
The old world's evil outcasts came.

But, with thy just and equal rule,
And labor's need and breadth of lands,
Free press and rostrum, church and school,
Thy sure, if slow, transforming hands

Shall mould even them to thy design,
Making a blessing of the ban;
And Freedom's chemistry combine
The alien elements of man.

The power that broke their prison bar
And set the dusky millions free,
And welded in the flame of war
The Union fast to Liberty,

Shall it not deal with other ills,
Redress the red man's grievance, break
The Circean cup which shames and kills,
And Labor full requital make?

Alone to such as fitly bear
Thy civic honors bid them fall?
And call thy daughters forth to share
The rights and duties pledged to all?

Give every child his right of school,
Merge private greed in public good,
And spare a treasury overfull
The tax upon a poor man's food?

No lack was in thy primal stock,
No weakling founders builded here;

Thine were the men of Plymouth Rock,
The Huguenot and Cavalier ;

And they whose firm endurance gained
The freedom of the souls of men,
Whose hands, unstained with blood, main-
tained

The swordless commonwealth of Penn.

And thine shall be the power of all
To do the work which duty bids.
And make the people's council hall
As lasting as the Pyramids !

Well have thy later years made good
Thy brave-said word a century back,
The pledge of human brotherhood,
The equal claim of white and black.

That word still echoes round the world,
And all who hear it turn to thee,
And read upon thy flag unfurled
The prophecies of destiny.

Thy great world-lesson all shall learn,
The nations in thy school shall sit,
Earth's farthest mountain-tops shall burn
With watch-fires from thy own uplift.

Great without seeking to be great
By fraud or conquest, rich in gold,
But richer in the large estate
Of virtue which thy children hold,

With peace that comes of purity
And strength to simple justice due,
So runs our loyal dream of thee;
God of our fathers! — make it true.

O Land of lands! to thee we give
Our prayers, our hopes, our service free;
For thee thy sons shall nobly live,
And at thy need shall die for thee!

THE "STORY OF IDA."

WEARY of jangling noises never stilled,
The skeptic's sneer, the bigot's hate, the din
Of clashing texts, the webs of creed men spin
Round simple truth, the children grown who
build

With gilded cards their new Jerusalem,
Busy, with sacerdotal tailorings
And tinsel gauds, bedizening holy things,
I turn, with glad and grateful heart, from
them

To the sweet story of the Florentine
Immortal in her blameless maidenhood,
Beautiful as God's angels and as good ;
Feeling that life, even now, may be divine
With love no wrong can ever change to hate,
No sin make less than all-compassionate !

AN AUTOGRAPH.

I WRITE my name as one,
On sands by waves o'errun
Or winter's frosted pane,
Traces a record vain.

Oblivion's blankness claims
Wiser and better names,
And well my own may pass
As from the strand or glass.

Wash on, O waves of time!
Melt, noons, the frosty rime!
Welcome the shadow vast,
The silence that shall last!

When I and all who know
And love me vanish so,

What harm to them or me
Will the lost memory be?

If any words of mine,
Through right of life divine,
Remain, what matters it
Whose hand the message writ?

Why should the "crownèd quest"
Sit on my worst or best?
Why should the showman claim
The poor ghost of my name?

Yet, as when dies a sound
Its spectre lingers round,
Haply my spent life will
Leave some faint echo still.

A whisper giving breath
Of praise or blame to death,
Soothing or saddening such
As loved the living much.

Therefore with yearnings vain
And fond I still would fain
A kindly judgment seek,
A tender thought bespeak.

And, while my words are read,
Let this at least be said:
“Whate’er his life’s defeatures,
He loved his fellow creatures.

“If, of the Law’s stone table,
To hold he scarce was able
The first great precept fast,
He kept for man the last.

“Through mortal lapse and dullness
What lacks the Eternal Fullness,
If still our weakness can
Love Him in loving man?

“Age brought him no despairing
Of the world’s future faring;

In human nature still
He found more good than ill.

“To all who dumbly suffered,
His tongue and pen he offered;
His life was not his own,
Nor lived for self alone.

“Hater of din and riot
He lived in days unquiet;
And, lover of all beauty,
Trod the hard ways of duty.

“He meant no wrong to any
He sought the good of many,
Yet knew both sin and folly,—
May God forgive him wholly!”



